

Basic Skills Attainment System

Introduction to Basic Skills

The Workforce Investment Act defines basic skills as “the individual computes or solves problems, reads, writes, or speaks English at or below the 8th grade level or is unable to compute or solve problems, read, write, or speak English at a level necessary to function on the job, in the individual's family, or in society.”

For the purposes of further defining basic skills and designing this basic skills attainment system, we will be targeting **reading and math**.

Our local area’s main strategy for basic skills will be to use the criteria on being below the 8th grade level as measured on a **standardized test**, but also recognizes that not all young people can successfully perform on these tests given their learning diversities.

In the cases where the young person is unable to perform on such tests, it will be acceptable to use a **functionally applied approach** to assess and benchmark basic skills attainments. Requirements for each approach are outlined in this benchmarking system.

Learning Objectives

This basic skill benchmarking systems allows for one approach for identifying specific learning objectives for basic skills: standardized testing.

Standardized Testing:

When a standardized test is used, there are defined learning objectives associated with the instrument, in which case, those defined learning objectives become the outcomes for the young person's training plan.

The list of currently approved tools that may be used for our local system, as defined in WorkForce Plus, are:

- Test of Adult Basic Education (TABE);
- DOL Workplace Literacy Test (DOL-WLT);
- Adult Basic Learning Examination (ABLE);
- Adult Literacy Test (ALT), Simon & Schuster;
- Armed Forces Qualifying Test (AFQT);
- Basic Occupational Literacy Test (BOLT);
- California Achievement Test (CAT);
- Career Ability Placement Survey (CAPS);
- Comprehensive Adult Student Assessment System (CASAS);
- CASAS Appraisal
- CASAS Survey Achievement
- General Aptitude Test Battery (GATB);
- Iowa Test of Basic Skills (ITBS);
- Metropolitan Achievement Test (MAT);
- Reading Job Corps Screening Test (RJCST);
- Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT);
- Computer Learning Work (CLW);
- Appropriate assessments from school system; or,

Functional Application:

The functional approaches only applies to those **in-school young people** with special needs, the learning objectives can be the outcomes identified on the Individual Education Plan (IEP) developed by the school system. Since IEP's are very specific in nature, only those with **academic goals** identified are appropriate for capturing a basic skills outcome.

Entry Assessment

Upon registration into the WIA youth programs, each young person will need to have an assessment of his/her current basic skills levels for reading and math skills.

A current assessment is defined as an assessment that has been conducted within one year of registration.

To avoid unnecessary duplication of services, providers should attempt to collect basic skills assessment information from the school system or other community partners who may have this current assessment information. When a current assessment does not exist, the provider is required to administer an assessment to identify each young person's basic skills levels.

Any young person registering for WIA that is **determined basic skills deficient is required to have a basic skills intervention as part of his/her service plan.**

For our local area, basic skill deficient is defined as:

1. For all youth: performing **at or below the 8.9 grade level** on a standardized test.
2. For those youth enrolled in secondary education who are above 8.9: performing **one or more grade levels below expected proficiency** for the current age and grade level.
3. For those in-school youth who have an IEP: **specific academic goals articulated in reading or math on an IEP developed by the school system.**

For each young person, **it is required that the instrument being used is clearly documented in the case file when using a standardized test; or in the cases of young people with special needs, a copy of the current IEP or specifically identified basic skills is to be in the file when using a functional approach.**

Basic Skills Assessment Outcomes

Name

Social Security Number

Standardized Testing:

Entry Assessment

Reading Level _____

Test _____

Date _____

Math Level _____

Test _____

Date _____

Final Assessment

Reading Level _____

Test _____

Date _____

Math Level _____

Test _____

Date _____

Skill Attainment Goal:

Functional Application:

Entry Assessment

____ IEP Reading Goals

____ IEP Math Goals

Final Assessment

Achieved IEP Reading Goals

_____ Yes _____ No

Achieved IEP Math Goals

_____ Yes _____ No

Skill Attainment Goal:

Skill Attainment Definition

Reading and math are considered as two separate and discrete skill areas for purposes of defining and obtaining credit for a skill attainment. As such, they will be viewed independent of each other, allowing for goals to be set for each of the two areas (reading or math).

If a young person is basic skills deficient, he or she must have at least one basic skills goal set as part of his/her service plan. Under our interpretation of current guidance on skills attainment, it would also be allowable to set a goal in each of the basic skills areas. When setting a goal for basic skills intervention, the specific skill area where intervention is being targeted must be clearly identified, i.e. reading or math.

For those youth defined in need of basic skills interventions, an attainment is defined as:

1. For all youth performing at or below the 8.9 grade level: improvement of a basic skill by **at least one grade level** as documented by standardized test scores.
2. For those youth enrolled in secondary education who are above 8.9, but performing one or more grade levels below expected proficiency for the current age and grade level: improvement of a basic skill by **at least one grade level** as documented by standardized test scores.
3. For those in-school youth who have an IEP with specific academic goals articulated in reading or math: **achievement of the specific basic skills goals** (i.e. reading or math goals depending on which basic skill area was identified) that have been identified on an approved **Individual Education Plan as documented by the school system.**

To report a “skill attainment” for basic skills:

- the specific skills area in which training is to be provided on must be defined (reading or math);
- there must be a goal set on the ISS and entered in WorkForce Plus;
- one of the three skill attainment requirements must be satisfied;
- there must be documentation supporting the assessment instrument used, need for training, goal setting process and attainment of the skills; and,
- the goal must be obtained within a 12 month period from the goal set date in WorkForce Plus.

Identified Goal and Training Plan

For each outcome identified, there must be a clearly identified goal and training plan designed to meet the outcome. This documentation includes the goal identified on the ISS and in the WorkForce Plus system, and any training outlines for the specific goal identified.

Training Curricula and Methods

Each provider will develop curricula that will provide young people with content and context to develop the knowledge and skills to demonstrate proficiency in the Basic Skills. Each Provider will also need to have a documented service intervention that leads to reportable outcomes.

Final Assessment

A final assessment showing growth in the identified skill area is required to show improvement as related to the definition of skill attainment. Under this benchmarking system, there are two options for documenting skill growth in correlation to the outcome.

1. Standardized Testing - Grade Level or Score Increase:

As a general rule, the same assessment instrument must be used to measure growth as was administered to show deficiency.

2. Achievement of Functionally Applied Goals:

When using IEP goals for basic skills, the Provider will collect documentation that supports the achievement of the specified academic goals (i.e. reading or math goals depending on which basic skill area was identified).

Required Documentation

As with any reporting system, there are multiple and integrated methods and tools for documenting skill outcomes. For the basic skills attainment, the following apply:

1. **Entry Assessment** documentation of need based on approved standardized instruments or a copy of the IEP.
2. **Basic Skills Assessment Outcomes** document is in the file, supported by test results or copies of IEP.
3. **Identified Goal and Training Plan/ISS** documentation stating that the goal was set, the service interventions to meet the goal, and progress notes toward goal attainment.
4. **Training curricula** and methods used to attain skills.
5. **Final Assessment** documentation on approved standardized instruments or completion of functionally applied goals.
6. **WorkForce Plus** information has been accurately documented in accordance with WorkForce Plus directives including timely data entry.